

## Hoo Fort

<b>Commenced</b>	1861	<b>Armament</b>	11 x 9-inch R.M.L.s
<b>Completed</b>	1871		
<b>Cost</b>	£ 80,297 estimated 1869		
<b>Map Reference</b>	TR 796703		
<b>Position</b>	Island in Medway		
<b>Type</b>	Sea Front - casemated		
<b>Ditch</b>	Dry		
<b>Guns</b>	11		
<b>Barrack Accom.</b>	100		
<b>Present use</b>	Derelict		
	In care and maintenance until		
<b>History</b>	c.1920.		
	Observation post WW2		
<b>Disposal</b>	Still MoD		
<b>Condition</b>	Good		
<b>Access</b>	Officially none		
	Gulvin, 'Chatham's Concrete Ring' R. Crowdy,		
	'Medway's Island Forts' P.MacDougall 'Victorian		
	Fort of the Medway' Hoo Fort Experiments' by		
	Ron Crowdy		
<b>Sources</b>			

### History and Description

Hoo and Darnet Forts were commenced 1861. In 1867 they were reduced from the planned three tiers to two, after severe problems with subsidence, and they were commissioned in 1871. They are constructed on islands that lie either side of the main channel of the River Medway about 1 Km apart, down-river of Chatham Dockyard.

The forts are circular giving all-round defence. Accommodation casemates and magazines were on the ground floor with gun casemates above, all casemates being built around a circular parade ground. Early in 1863 the design was changed, moving the magazines from a central location to the sides. This caused a shift in weight resulting in cracks in the masonry at Hoo, then Darnet. This was arrested with iron bands round the masonry and iron tie rods into the concrete. Entry to the fort is via two gates separated by a drawbridge. The magazines were given a concrete skirt to prevent flooding. The basement level consisted of shell and cartridge stores in an outer ring with a magazine passage running around the fort to connect the. An inner ring contained Officers', NCOs and men's quarters with ablutions and stores. The upper level consisted of eleven gun casemates in a radial pattern with a central open courtyard.

The Sheerness Guardian of 25 July 1874 reported "A detachment of the Royal Artillery at Sheerness has been ordered to proceed to the new fort at Hoo Ness, one of two which have been constructed for the defence of the Medway and Chatham dockyards and stones are now being conveyed to the fort. This powerful circular fort and one built on the opposite side of the river at Bishop's Marsh will command the passage of the river with the immense guns with which they will be armed. From the nature of the soil, the foundation of these forts proved very costly".

The forts were disarmed before WW1 but remained in care and maintenance until 1920. In 1930 experiments were carried out at Hoo Fort, and to a lesser extent at Darnet Fort, 'to ascertain the likely damage to underground magazines caused by accidental explosion of stored cases of cordite'. The accommodation casemates were used for the above ground experiments whilst the magazines were used for the below ground experiments. Some damage was recorded and the final test caused the collapse of the magazine roof.

In WW2 they served as observation posts, with small brick structures built on their tops. Both forts remain in good condition. Hoo is still owned by the Ministry of Defence.

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